

CRITICAL INCIDENT REACTIONS

After being involved in an intense, unusual, or abnormal event (critical incident), you may experience reactions that are out of the ordinary for you. This is not an uncommon experience. The event may create a stress response which can result in changes in your usual physical or emotional reactions. These reactions are normal. Often these reactions appear immediately after the event, but they may appear hours, weeks or months later. Some of the more common reactions reported by individuals after a critical incident may include (but are not limited to):

PHYSICAL*	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	BEHAVIORAL
Nausea	Anxiety	Memory Problem	Withdrawal
Intestinal upset	Grief	Poor Attention	Restlessness
Fatigue	Guilt	Nightmares	Antisocial acts
Rapid Heart	Denial	Intrusive Images	Increased ETOH
Chest Pain	Fear	Hyper-alertness	Avoidance
Difficulty Breathing	Depression	Loss of orientation	Change in speech
Shock symptoms	Panic	Poor problem solve	Change in appetite
Muscle cramps	Apprehension	Poor decisions	Startle reflex
Headaches	Disturbed thinking	Sleep Disturbance	Blaming others
Chills	Irritability	Flashbacks	Pacing

Some people exposed to the same event may not suffer any effects at all; this, too, is a normal reaction. While these reactions can be alarming and unsettling, it is important to remember that you are not losing your mind or “falling apart.”

We want you to understand that these are normal reactions that normal people experience after an abnormal event. The intensity and frequency of these reactions usually decrease after one to three weeks.

If you are experiencing painful thoughts, memories or feelings during this period, we would like you to call and request to speak with the CISM Team member on call.

If you believe that you need additional assistance, contact the CISM Team.

*Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation